

~~ADMINISTRATIVE - INTERNAL USE ONLY~~

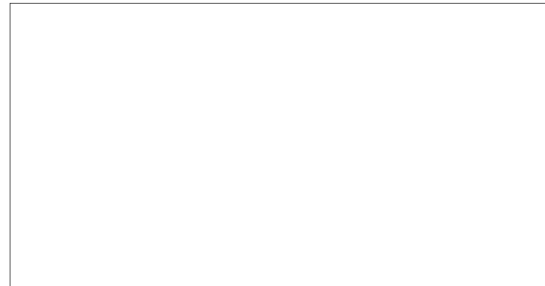
HPSCI
[Handwritten notes and stamps]

OCA 86-2567
29 July 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR: EPS [Redacted]
VIA: DD/House Affairs, OCA
FROM: [Redacted]
House Affairs, OCA
SUBJECT: Miami Herald News Article

STAT

1. OCA has received a call from Dick Giza, HPSCI staff, regarding the validity of the attached article. Please respond by 5 August.



Attachment:
As stated

Distribution:
Original - Addressee (w/att)
1 - D/OCA "
1 - OCA Record "
1 - OCA Chrono (w/o att)
1 - JCW Chrono (w/att)
HA/OCA: [Redacted] dpt (29 Jul 86)

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SUN JUL 27 1986 ED: FINAL
SECTION: FRONT PAGE: 7A LENGTH: 16.94" MEDIUM
ILLUST: photo: Adolfo CALERO
SOURCE: DOYLE McMANUS Los Angeles Times Service
DATELINE: WASHINGTON
MEMO: AROUND THE AMERICAS

.....
THREE PLANES READIED
TO JOIN*CONTRA*FLEET*

Inside a battered steel hangar on an inconspicuous little airfield in Southern California, three small airplanes are being fitted out to become part of an unpredictable but potentially volatile new factor in Central America's guerrilla wars -- the contras' air force.

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Menu: F1 Print: F3 Disk: F4 Macro: F5 Break: F6
8:34 am Tuesday July 29, 1986

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The Nicaraguan rebels, with help from a network of former U.S. military and intelligence officers operating in this country, are quietly assembling and equipping a*fleet*of small aircraft that will give the guerrillas a potentially important new capability in their war against the Sandinista regime.

The contras already have 14 aircraft at a secret air base in Honduras, rebel officials say. They look forward to acquiring the three planes that are being rebuilt in California's San Diego County -- aging, propeller-driven aircraft donated by retired U.S. Air Force officers -- and they are seeking still more.

So far, none of the 12 planes and two helicopters at the base has been equipped for combat,*contra*officials say. Instead, the fledgling air force is being used chiefly to transport and resupply guerrilla units all over Nicaragua -- "to fight the way the Viet Cong did in Vietnam, only with the added advantage of air supply," said a CIA veteran who is helping in the effort.

At this point, the*contra*air force is still badly outmatched by the Sandinista air force of at least 43 aircraft. And, according to all accounts, it has been largely ineffective, with many of its aircraft grounded for lack of maintenance and

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many of its pilots hesitant to fly missions that would expose them to fire from the Sandinistas' Soviet-made helicopter gunships.

"It's been a real hip-pocket operation," said Edwin Dearborn, a former CIA pilot who has been helping to organize the force. "There have been times when we've run out of gas."

Already, the contras may be the first guerrilla insurgency in history with its own airlift wing. But in the future, the contras say, they also will be looking for combat aircraft as a means of escalating the war against the Marxist-led Sandinistas even further.

we want to use every message that...
democracy Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2011/04/19 : CIA-RDP90B01390R000400520011-7
Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN), the largest*contra*army. "If
we can get more airplanes, so much the better."

"We're looking for people to contribute both money and
airplanes," said Dearborn, a Newport Beach, Calif., resident.
Dearborn is overseeing the reconstruction of the three donated
airplanes for the contras in San Diego County; he talked about
them on condition that their precise location not be disclosed.
The aircraft include a 1958-vintage Cessna L-19 spotter plane, a
Cessna 337 utility plane and a Helio Courier short-takeoff-and-

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landing plane.

"If we had four of these, we'd be in pig heaven," he said,
slapping the fuselage of the Helio Courier. "You can carry 2,000
pounds on these and land on a 400-foot runway chopped out of the
jungle. If some guy wants to see his name on there (as a
donor), all it'll take is \$40,000."

ADDED TERMS: aid guerrilla nicaragua airplane
ND OF DOCUMENT.